

Assemblyman
PAUL KORETZ
Forty-second Assembly District

proudly representing the communities of West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Century City, Westwood, Bel Air, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Hollywood, Hancock Park, Universal City, Studio City, and Sherman Oaks



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Koretz Urges Medicaid Programs to Change Transplant Policies for Patients with HIV

Cites Arizona Judge's Ruling & Recent California Legislation

(West Hollywood) – Assemblyman Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) today called on state Medicaid programs to change their policies of denying coverage for organ transplants for patients with HIV. On Monday the *Arizona Republic* reported that a woman with end-stage liver disease who had been denied coverage by the Arizona Medicaid program won her complaint against the government. An administrative law judge ruled the woman's lifesaving transplant should be covered by Medicaid.

"Across the nation numerous reviews by judges, regulators, legislative committees, internal insurance industry appeal boards, and other deliberative bodies have found that qualified HIV patients should have access to lifesaving organ transplants. The Arizona ruling further underscores that the time has come for every Medicaid program in the nation to abandon their outdated perceptions that HIV status alone is grounds for transplant coverage denials," said Assemblyman Koretz.

Despite the judge's ruling and an agreement to cover costs for one patient, the Arizona Medicaid program has not changed its policy but is considering doing so. In California, Assemblyman Koretz authored AB 228 which was enacted in September and prohibits health plan and insurer denials of transplant coverage based solely on a patient's HIV status. The California Medicaid program, known as Medi-Cal, has no formal policy of denying these patients coverage, and recently has been granting coverage on a case by case basis. This first step has enabled California Medi-Cal patients to receive the coverage necessary to qualify for the national waiting list for available organs.

"I urge all state Medicaid administrators to update coverage policies for organ transplants in patients with HIV. This is medically necessary care that studies have shown saves lives. To appeal a denial or initiate a special authorization takes time that many of these patients simply don't have," said Koretz.

Historically, HIV positive patients have not been considered suitable candidates for organ transplantation due to their relatively shortened lifespan. Today, anti-retroviral medications have greatly extended the life expectancy of persons living with HIV infection, and studies have shown that organ transplants in qualified patients with HIV lead to outcomes similar to non-HIV infected patients.

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Arizona Republic - <http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/local/articles/1031HIVLIVER.html#>

Information on AB 228 (Koretz) Organ Transplants for Patients with HIV -
http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/postquery?bill_number=ab_228&sess=CUR&house=B&author=koretz